

What is claimed is:

1. A process for attaching a mechanical fastener to a disposable absorbent article and protecting said mechanical fastener before said disposable absorbent article is handled by a user, said process comprising the following steps:
  - 5 providing said disposable absorbent article which includes an outer cover, a bodyside liner, and an absorbent core disposed between said outer cover and said bodyside liner;  
providing said mechanical fastener which includes a first fastening element;
  - 10 attaching said first fastening element of said mechanical fastener to said disposable absorbent article;  
releasably engaging said first fastening element with said disposable absorbent article to protect said first fastening element; and
  - 15 subsequently packaging said disposable absorbent article for commercial sale.
2. The process according to claim 1 wherein said step of providing said disposable absorbent article includes joining at least one ear tab to said disposable absorbent article and wherein said first fastening element is attached to said at least one ear tab.
3. The process according to claim 2 wherein said first fastening element is releasably engaged with said at least one ear tab.
4. The process according to claim 1 wherein said first fastening element is releasably engaged with said bodyside liner of said disposable absorbent article.
5. The process according to claim 1 wherein said first fastening element is releasably engaged with said outer cover of said disposable absorbent article.

6. The process according to claim 1 wherein said first fastening element is releasably engaged with said disposable absorbent article to provide a peel strength of at least about 20 grams.

7. The process according to claim 1 wherein said first fastening element and a portion of said disposable absorbent article are releasably engaged by passing between a pair of rotatable nip rolls.

8. A process for attaching a hook material of a hook-and-loop type mechanical fastener to a disposable absorbent article and protecting said hook material before said disposable absorbent article is handled by a user, said process comprising the following steps:

5 providing said disposable absorbent article which includes an outer cover, a bodyside liner, and an absorbent core disposed between said outer cover and said bodyside liner;

providing said hook material which includes a base sheet and stemlike projections which extend from said base sheet;

10 attaching said base sheet of said hook material to said disposable absorbent article;

releasably engaging said stemlike projections with said disposable absorbent article to protect said hook material; and

15 subsequently packaging said disposable absorbent article for commercial sale.

9. The process according to claim 8 wherein said step of providing said disposable absorbent article includes joining at least one ear tab to said disposable absorbent article and wherein said base sheet of said hook material is attached to said at least one ear tab.

10. The process according to claim 9 wherein said stemlike projections are releasably engaged with said at least one ear tab.

11. The process according to claim 9 wherein said stemlike projections are releasably engaged with said bodyside liner of said disposable absorbent article.

12. The process according to claim 8 wherein said stemlike projections are releasably engaged with said bodyside liner of said disposable absorbent article.

13. The process according to claim 8 wherein said stemlike projections are releasably engaged with said outer cover of said disposable absorbent article.

14. The process according to claim 8 wherein said stemlike projections are releasably engaged with said disposable absorbent article to provide a peel strength of at least about 20 grams.

15. The process according to claim 8 wherein said stemlike projections are releasably engaged with said disposable absorbent article to provide a peel strength of from about 30 to about 90 grams.

16. The process according to claim 8 wherein said disposable absorbent article further includes at least one loop material capable of releasably engaging with said stemlike projections of said hook material.

17. The process according to claim 16 wherein said stemlike projections are releasably engaged with said loop material.

18. The process according to claim 8 wherein said stemlike projections and a portion of said disposable absorbent article are releasably engaged by passing between a pair of rotatable nip rolls.

19. The process according to claim 18 wherein at least one of said rotatable nip rolls has a plurality of pins extending therefrom.

20. The process according to claim 18 wherein at least one of said rotatable nip rolls has a plurality of grooves arranged in a cross directional configuration about a circumferential surface of said at least one nip roll.

21. A disposable absorbent article which includes an outer cover, a bodyside liner, an absorbent core disposed between said outer cover and said bodyside liner and at least one hook-and-loop type mechanical fastener which includes a hook material, wherein said  
5 disposable absorbent article is produced by a process comprising the following steps:

providing said hook material which includes a base sheet and stemlike projections which extend from said base sheet;

10 attaching said base sheet of said hook material to said disposable absorbent article;

releasably engaging said stemlike projections of said hook material with said disposable absorbent article to protect said stemlike projections before said disposable absorbent article is handled by a user; and

15 subsequently packaging said disposable absorbent article for commercial sale.

22. The disposable absorbent article according to claim 21 wherein said disposable absorbent article further includes at least one ear tab and wherein said base sheet of said hook material is attached to said at least one ear tab.

23. The disposable absorbent article according to claim 22 wherein said stemlike projections are releasably engaged with said at least one ear tab.

24. The disposable absorbent article according to claim 22 wherein said at least one ear tab is an elastic material.

25. The disposable absorbent article according to claim 22 wherein said stemlike projections are releasably engaged with said bodyside liner of said disposable absorbent article.

26. The disposable absorbent article according to claim 21 wherein said stemlike projections are releasably engaged with said bodyside liner of said disposable absorbent article.

27. The disposable absorbent article according to claim 26 wherein said bodyside liner is a spunbond material.

28. The disposable absorbent article according to claim 21 wherein said stemlike projections are releasably engaged with said outer cover of said disposable absorbent article.

29. The disposable absorbent article according to claim 28 wherein said outer cover comprises a stretch thermal laminate material.

30. The disposable absorbent article according to claim 21 wherein said stemlike projections are releasably engaged with said disposable absorbent article to provide a peel strength of at least about 20 grams.

31. The disposable absorbent article according to claim 21 wherein said stemlike projections are releasably engaged with said disposable absorbent article to provide a peel strength of from about 30 to about 90 grams.

32. The disposable absorbent article according to claim 21 wherein said disposable absorbent article further includes at least one loop material which is joined to said disposable absorbent article and wherein said stemlike projections are releasably engaged with said  
5 loop material.

33. The disposable absorbent article according to claim 32 wherein said loop material includes a nonwoven material.

34. The disposable absorbent article according to claim 21 wherein said stemlike projections and a portion of said disposable absorbent article are releasably engaged by passing between a pair of rotatable nip rolls.

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35. A package of disposable absorbent articles comprising a plurality of said disposable absorbent articles wherein each of said disposable absorbent articles includes an outer cover, a bodyside liner, an absorbent core disposed between said outer cover and said bodyside liner, and at least one mechanical fastener, wherein said at least one mechanical fastener is releasably engaged with said disposable absorbent article to protect said mechanical fastener before said disposable absorbent article is handled by a user.

36. The package of disposable absorbent articles according to claim 35 wherein said mechanical fastener is a hook-and-loop type mechanical fastener which comprises a hook material which includes a base sheet and stemlike projections extending from said base sheet, said stemlike projections of said mechanical fastener being releasably engaged with said disposable absorbent article to protect said hook material before said disposable absorbent article is handled by a user.

37. The package of disposable absorbent articles according to claim 35 wherein each of said disposable absorbent articles further includes at least one ear tab which is attached to said disposable absorbent article and wherein said base sheet of said hook material is attached to said at least one ear tab.

38. The package of disposable absorbent articles according to claim 37 wherein said stemlike projections are releasably engaged with said at least one ear tab.

39. The package of disposable absorbent articles according to claim 37 wherein said at least one ear tab is an elastic material.

40. The package of disposable absorbent articles according to claim 37 wherein said stemlike projections are releasably engaged with said bodyside liner of said disposable absorbent article.

41. The package of disposable absorbent articles according to claim 36 wherein said stemlike projections are releasably engaged with said bodyside liner of said disposable absorbent article.

42. The package of disposable absorbent articles according to claim 36 wherein said stemlike projections are releasably engaged with said outer cover of said disposable absorbent article.

43. The package of disposable absorbent articles according to claim 36 wherein said stemlike projections are releasably engaged with said disposable absorbent article to provide a peel strength of at least about 20 grams.

44. The package of disposable absorbent articles according to claim 36 wherein said stemlike projections are releasably engaged with said disposable absorbent article to provide a peel strength of from about 30 to about 90 grams.

45. The package of disposable absorbent articles according to claim 36 wherein said disposable absorbent article further includes at least one loop material which is joined to said disposable absorbent article and wherein said stemlike projections are  
5 releasably engaged with said loop material.

46. The package of disposable absorbent articles according to claim 45 wherein said loop material includes a nonwoven material.

47. The package of disposable absorbent articles according to claim 36 wherein said stemlike projections and a portion of said disposable absorbent article are releasably engaged by passing between a pair of rotatable nip rolls.

48. A package of disposable absorbent articles comprising a plurality of said disposable absorbent articles wherein each of said disposable absorbent articles includes an outer cover, a bodyside liner, an absorbent core disposed between said outer cover and said

5 bodyside liner, and at least one hook-and-loop type mechanical  
fastener which comprises a hook material which includes a base sheet  
and stemlike projections extending from said base sheet, said  
stemlike projections being releasably engaged with said disposable  
absorbent article to protect said hook material and provide a  
10 pant-like structure before said disposable absorbent article is  
handled by a user.

49. The package of disposable absorbent articles according to  
claim 48 wherein each of said disposable absorbent articles further  
includes at least one ear tab which is attached to said disposable  
absorbent article and wherein said base sheet of said hook material  
5 is attached to said at least one ear tab.

50. The package of disposable absorbent articles according to  
claim 48 wherein said mechanical fastener further comprises a loop  
material which is attached to said disposable absorbent article and  
wherein said stemlike projections are releasably engaged with said  
5 loop material to protect said stemlike projections and provide said  
pant-like structure.

51. The package of disposable absorbent articles according to  
claim 48 wherein said stemlike projections are releasably engaged  
with said outer cover of said disposable absorbent article.

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